

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended, and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, 43-52, and 54-57 are pending in this application, Claims 1, 15, and 43 having been currently amended. Support for amended Claims 1, 15, and 43, and new Claim 57 can be found for example, in the original claims, drawings, and specification as originally filed.¹ No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, and 43-56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, 43-52, and 54-56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ikegami (U.S. Patent No. 6,745,334).

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, and 43-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 15, and 43 to correct the informality noted in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been overcome.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, and 43-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ikegami, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection and traverse the rejection as discussed next.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to an image forming apparatus that can include a plurality of applications, the image forming apparatus including, *inter alia*:

...a displaying part displaying a screen used for selecting an application on an operation display part of the image forming apparatus, wherein ***the screen shows applications and assignment status of each application indicating whether a function key is already assigned***; and

¹ See Figure 6, 7, 9, and 11.

an assigning part assigning a selected application that is selected on the screen to a function key when the function key is pushed, such that the selected application is executed when the function key is later pushed after assigning of the selected application has occurred;

wherein the function key is a key used for a user to select and execute an application from a plurality of applications that are useable on the image forming apparatus and that include at least one of a copy application, a printer application, and a facsimile application.

Independent Claims 15 and 43 recite substantially similar features as those recited in independent Claim 1. Thus, the arguments presented below with respect to independent Claim 1 are also applicable to independent Claims 15 and 43.

By way of background, in a non-limiting embodiment of Applicants' invention, Figures 6 and 7 show a function key assignment status in the left side of the screen. In the function key assignment status, the number at the right side of each function key name indicates the number of applications assigned to the corresponding function key. For example, in Figure 6, two applications are allocated to the Copy function key, and three applications are allocated to the scanner function key.

Turning now to the applied reference, Ikegami is directed to an image forming apparatus including a display panel which is operated by a plurality of touch sensors. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Ikegami fails to suggest "a displaying part displaying a screen used for selecting an application on an operation display part of the image forming apparatus, wherein the screen shows applications and assignment status of each application indicating whether a function key is already assigned," as recited in Applicants' independent Claim 1.

Figures 6 and 8B of Ikegami show keys 624-634 that are displayed within the display panel 620. Ikegami describes that when a displayed key is touched a corresponding mode is set. However, the display panel 620 in Ikegami does not show assignment status of each

application indicating whether a function key is already assigned. Figures 6 and 8B of Ikegami merely show the names of functions displayed within the keys.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 15, and 43 (and all claims depending thereon) patentably distinguish over Ikegami.

In regard to new Claim 57, Applicants respectfully submit that Ikegami fails to teach or suggest that “when the function key is pushed for the assigning of the selected application, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number.”

Pages 19-20 of the outstanding Office Action, in the Response to Applicants’ Remarks Section, asserts that Ikegami:

...discloses clearly wherein when the function key is pushed for the selected application (Col. 8 lines 20-24- thus when the key is pressed) the image forming apparatus displays a screen (Col. 8 lines 24-25- thus when the key is pressed, display panel 620 presents a display settings for which paper cassette is supplied) indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application (Col. 8 lines 44-47- thus the key on the screen is caused to show as shaded to indicate that the key cannot be assigned or operated) if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number. (Col. 8 lines 60-64- if the screen indicates shaded then the maximum limit or number has been reached and therefore is impossible to assign more).

Applicants respectfully disagree to the above assertions for the reasons noted below.

First, Applicants note that Column 8, lines 20-24 of Ikegami describes that keys 624-634 are displayed within the display panel 620 and when a displayed key is touched a corresponding mode is set. However, the description at Column 8, lines 20-24 of Ikegami describes that by pressing a particular key a mode is set ***with respect to the image forming apparatus*** (e.g. a printing mode is started and the apparatus begins printing), it does not

describe that a particular application is **assigned** (i.e. programmed) to a particular function key when the displayed key is pressed.

Column 8, lines 24-25 of Ikegami also describe that when a key for selecting a paper cassette 627 is pressed, the display panel 620 presents a display that indicates from which of the cassettes 131, 132 paper is to be supplied from. However, this cassette indication screen in no way indicates that the paper cassette selection key 627 (function key) cannot be assigned to the selected application. This portion of Ikegami also describes that the paper cassette selection key 627 is the key for selecting the paper cassette, it does not describe that the paper cassette selection 627 is a function key that can be assigned to a particular application (reassigned to control another function). In other words, there is no description that the paper cassette selection key 627 is assignable.

Page 19 of the outstanding Office Action also asserts that column 8, lines 44-47 of Ikegami describes a “key on the screen is caused to show as shaded to indicate that the key cannot be **assigned** or operated.” (Emphasis added). Applicants respectfully disagree. Nowhere does column 8, lines 44-47 of Ikegami describe that the shading of the key indicates that the function key cannot be assigned. In contrast, the shading of the key indicates that a particular operation of the image forming apparatus is not **functioning properly**. Whereas, in Applicants’ Claim 1, a screen is displayed that indicates that the function key cannot be assigned to a selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number. In other words, the shading of the key in Ikegami does not relate at all to the assigning of a selected application to a function key.

Next, the outstanding Office Action asserts that column 8, lines 60-64 of Ikegami describes that if a function key is shaded, then a maximum limit or number of functions has been reached and cannot be assigned anymore. Applicants respectfully disagree. As described above, the shading of a function key in Ikegami merely describes that the particular

operation of the image forming apparatus is not operable, but in no way indicates that a maximum number of applications has already been assigned to the function key, as in Applicants' Claim 1.

Lastly, Figure 8B of Ikegami shows a display panel 620 that displays two preferred keys. However, Ikegami does not describe that when the preferred keys in display panel 620 are *pushed for the assigning of a selected application*, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number.

Column 8, lines 62 to column 9, line 8 of Ikegami states:

FIG. 8A shows a screen for setting the item of a preferred function key 1. This screen is displayed by pressing the user set key 618 and then selecting the setting of the preferred function key 1 at the setting item. By selecting an item on the screen shown in FIG. 8A and then pressing the "OK" key, keys of functions displayed by the preferred function key can be selected. New keys are displayed on the screen as shown in the example of FIG. 8B.

Thus, Ikegami merely describes that the maximum number of function keys that can be registered can be limited, but does not describe that a function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the preferred function key has already reached a limit number. In other words, Ikegami describes the maximum number of function keys, rather than a *maximum number of applications* that can be assigned to a *particular* function key. Also, Ikegami describes that "by selecting an item on the screen showing Figure 8A and then pressing the 'OK' key, keys of function displayed by the preferred function key can be selected." However, this portion of Ikegami does not describe that a *screen is displayed* on the image forming apparatus that *indicates* that the preferred function key 1, 2 cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications

assigned to the function key already reach a limit number. In fact, Ikegami does not appear to describe a limit number of applications assigned to a preferred function key at all.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, 43-52, and 54-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ikegami be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, and in light of the above discussion, the pending claims as presented herewith are believed to be in condition for formal allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

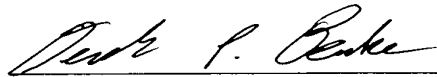
Respectfully submitted,

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